

PRESIDENT CUTS SOD FOR UNIVERSITY OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



President John Mahama has cut the sod for the construction of the University of Environment and Sustainable Development at Somanya, with the conviction that the incoming government will pursue the project to enable the nation to reap the expected benefits.

"It is my hope that as I prepare to hand over the administration of this country on January 7, next year, our exploits and initiatives will be sustained for the betterment of Ghana," he said at the sod-cutting ceremony which was attended by a large number of chiefs and people in the Yilo Krobo area.

The Eastern University, one of the President Mahama's promises during the 2012 electioneering, will have two campuses, with the main campus at Somanya and the other at Donkorkrom in the Afram Plains.

In April 2013, President Mahama inaugurated a 12-member committee to develop the road map for the establishment of an implementation committee.

With the conversion of the Koforidua Polytechnic into a technical University, the University of Environment and Sustainable Development will be the second public university in the Eastern Region.

Basic infrastructure such as academic buildings, students' residential facilities, staff accommodation and recreational facilities will be constructed on the Somanya Campus.

President Mahama said Parliament had approved a £45 million commercial agreement between the government and Contracta, a construction firm in Italy, for the development and construction of the university, adding that the beginning of construction would thus proceed unimpeded.

He said the implementation committee had completed work for the appointment of the foundation vice-chancellor.

Academic Programmes

"The University will run general and specialized degrees, including climate change, water resources development, energy sustainability and energy economics and policy. It will also run urban architecture, natural resources and environmental economics, environmental policy and environmental science," he said.

Generally, he said, the University would have four undergraduate schools—the School of Natural and Environmental Sciences, the school of Sustainable Development, the school of Agriculture and Agriculture Entrepreneurship and the School of the Built Environment.

There would be one graduate school which would comprise three research centers made up of the Centre for Agra Entrepreneurship, the Center for Agriculture AND Bio-Technology and the Center for Sustainable Resource Development, he added.

President Mahama thanked the Yilo Krobo Traditional Council for providing 312 acres of land for the project, which he indicated would create jobs for the people of the area, especially at the construction stage.

Other initiatives

The President said the government had completed preparations to make the Upper East and the Upper West campuses of the University for Development Studies (UDS) autonomous universities.

"We are proud of what we have been able to achieve by working together as Ghanaians. Ghana is on the cusp of a socio-economic breakthrough and we need critical human resource to meet the demands of industry," he told the gathering.

He disclosed that next week he would cut the sod for the construction of five new district hospitals, one of which would be at Somanya.

President Commended

The acting President of the Yilo Krobo Traditional Council, Nene Osayem Odokor Tumeh, thanked the president for fulfilling his promise to the people of the Eastern Region.

Source: *Daily Graphic*



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